(d) if so, the reasons due to which the Indian consumers do not get the benefit of minimum prices of crude oil prevailing in the international market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) (a) and (b) Oil prices in the international market are highly volatile in nature and these are driven by market forces viz. demand and supply fundamentals, political development in major oil producing/exporting countries viz. resumption of crude oil exports by Iraq towards and December, 96, abnormal variations in weather conditions etc. in various parts of the world market sentiments etc. prevailing at the given point of time.

The average prices of market crude oils viz Dubai, Oman and Dated Brent in the international market as published by Platt's crude oil market wire for the period Jan. 97 to Apr' 97 are USD 18.69/bbl, USD 19.57/bbl and USD 20.20/bbl respectively.

(c) and (d) The existing pricing of the petroleum products is administered according to which some petroleum products like SKO used by the vulnerable sections of the society are subsidised. Original Oil Economy Budget for the year 1996-97 had estimated that net import bill would be approx. US$ 7342.5 million. However, as per revised OEB, the import bill for year 1996-97 is now estimated at US $ 9321.6 million approx.

Oil Pool Account maintained by OCC is estimated to be deficit of Rs. 15,000 crores by 31.3.97 and this is projected to be Rs. 24500 crores by 31.3.98. This amount represents outstanding dues payable to the ojl companies by OCC. Government is exploring various options to contain this deficit.

[English]

Haj Pilgrimage

*447. SHRI RAM NAIK :
SHRI PRADIP BHATTACHARYA :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state

(a) the approximate number of Indians who went for recent Haj Pilgrimage and the number of persons who died or were injured and missing due to fire at Mecca and Mina;

(b) the efforts made/being made to provide relief to the famillies of deceased and injured persons;

(c) whether there are instructions for crisis management either to the Indian team or the Indian Embassy

(d) if so, the details thereof and the result of the relief measures made in this regard;

(e) whether the Government have sent a team to Jeddah to find out the facts; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) The total number of Indian nationals who went for Haj pilgrimage this year is approximately 81,000. Of these, 53,664 came through the Central Haj Committee. The balance of approximately 27,000 came through tour operators, from other countries or were residents in Saudi Arabia. The fire at Mina on April 15, resulted in casualties among Indian pilgrims. As of today the total number of identified dead is 94, the number of reported missing is 122, and the number of injured persons receiving treatment in Saudi Government hospitals is 147. In addition, another 269 persons were injured in the fire and its aftermath. Of this number 172 are receiving treatment from the Indian medical mission in Mecca. The total number of injured is estimated of approximately a little over 400.

(b) Government have announced wide ranging relief measures to the families of the deceased and injured persons. These include ex-gratia payment of rupees one lakh to the next of kin of the pilgrim killed in the fire and to the permanently disabled and free treatment to the injured in Government hospitals with financial help as may be required. The embassy of India in Savdi Arabia and the CGI in Jeddah were directed to provide immediate financial and other relief to the injured and to those who were rendered distitute in the fire. Government has offered to fly back to India by a special charter flight the injured pilgrims who were medically fit to travel. Government also offered to the next of kin of the dead to transport the bodies back to India free of cost. Those who have lost their travel documents in the fire are being issued duplicate documents expeditiously and free of cost. Government also mobilised the service of the Indian community in Jeddah and distributed clothes and cash to the needy pilgrims including the injured. Materials required to treat the injured i.e. bandages, cotton wool and ointments were airlifted to Jeddah by the Government of India. Several of the injured who were discharged earlier after receiving treatment in hospitals have since returned to India. Others are awaiting their assigned return flights for India as per the Haj charter schedule. These pilgrims continue to be under observation by the Indian medical mission deployed in Mecca and Madina, and are being rendered necessary medical care until their scheduled flights. Names of injured pilgrims on each return flight are being conveyed in advance by Air India office in Jeddah so as to facilitate their reception on arrival in Delhi and other entry points, as well as prompt medical attention to them and movement to hospitals and clinics as required. Reception of the pilgrims on return is being handled by the concerned State Haj Committee in coordination with MEA, Air India and immigration and Customs authorities. Prime Minister has appointed a two-member Ministerial Committee consisting of Shri. C.M. Ibrahim and Shri Maqbool Dar to deal with the implementation of relief measures. The relief measures are being implemented on an immediate basis through special arrangements created with the framework of Haj Cell in the Ministry of External Affairs for processing and disbursing relief amounts.

(c)and (d) All Indian Missions/Posts abroad have standing instructions and guidelines for emergency and crisis situations. The nature of the tragedy in Mina was of a kind

In which these guidelines hve a limited applicability. However, as soon as information about the fire and its impact on Indian pilgrims was made known to the Government on the afternoon of April 15, our Mission in Riyadh and the Consulate General in Jeddah were issued instructions to take all possible steps for relief and assistance to the injured pilgrims. The mission set up control rooms in Jeddah, Mecca and Riyadh to collect and disseminate the information on the casualties, and to co-ordinate the relief work and to handle enquiries from the relatives of the pilgrims. On the night of April 15 itself, food and drinking water was arranged for over 5,000 pilgrims. On subsequent days, a comprehensive routine was developed by the mission to (i) visit the morgue near Mina with relatives of the missing/ dead to help identify the dead; (ii) daily visits to all the hospitals in Mecca and Mina by the Indian medical mission to ascertain position regarding the Indians injured; (iii) setting up of a special dressing room for burns in the main dispensary at Mecca; (iv) making arrangements in all the nine branch dispensaries in Mecca for the treatment of the injured; (v) daily visits by doctors of Indian medical mission to all the buildings housing Indian pilgrims in Mecca; (vi) rendering assistance to indigent pilgrims through the Indian pilgrims Welfare Forum, Jeddah, which is a voluntary organization of resident Indians.

(e) and (f) A four member team comprising of three MPs and one former MP with experience in Haj matters visited Saudi Arabia from April 25–May 1 to enquire after the welfare of the pilgrims particularly the injured, and next of in and to advise on further relief measures as well as to take stock of the overall situatioin regarding missing pilgrims. The team visited the site of the fire and the injured pilgrims receiving treatement in the hospitals, met other pilgrims and had discussions with the Saudi officials concerned with the Haj arrangement and Indian Ambassador and the Consul General. The team's recommendation for immediate disbursement of financial relief to the injured being treated in Saudi Arabia and grant of ex-gratia relief of rupees one lakh to the permanently disabled have been accepted The teams report including its other recommendations are under the consideration of the Government. Earlier an official team led by Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs visited Jeddah on April 17-20 to assess the situation and to supervise relief measures required.

Foreign Exchange

*448. SHRI UTTAMSINGH PAWAR : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons who have surrendered foreign exchange during the last three years as required under Section 14 of FERA;

(b) whether the Government have set up any machinery to identify the law violators;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the number of persons identified and prosecuted during the above period;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to check illegal accumulation of foreign exchange?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) Data in this regard are not being separately generated.

(b) to (d) A separate department namely the Enforcement Directorate is there to deal with the violators of the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Regulations Act, 1973 (FERA). Number of persons prosecuted in the courts for violations of the provisions of the FERA during the last three years are as under:

Year	Number of prosecutions launched
1994	264
1995	202
1996	101

(e) The Government, through its enforcement agencies, keeps a regular check on illegal accumulation of foreign exchange.

Currency Notes and Coins

*449. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of currency notes and coins of different denominations which are in circulation in the country;

(b) whether the Government monitor the position of currency notes and coins of different denomination;

(c) if so, the details of the currency notes and coins which are in short supply; and

(d) the steps taken to fulfil the demand of such denomination currency notes and coins?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a)The currency notes and coins